

Message Text

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S E C R E T GABORONE 1872

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SUBJ: S. AFRICA POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT

REF: STATE 153145

1. WE SUBSCRIBE TO THE MAIN POINTS OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S ANALYSIS AND APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT. THREE ASPECTS OF THE ANALYSIS SEEM BEYOND DISPUTE: (A) THAT AFRICA'S LONG-TERM GOAL LIES IN STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL OBSTACLES TO OUTSIDE INTERVENTION; (B) THAT ULTIMATELY IT IS UP TO AFRICANS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, SOMETHING THE OAU (FOR OBVIOUS REASONS) IS PRESENTLY INCAPABLE OF DOING; AND (C) ETHNIC MINORITIES ARE THE MOST EXPLOSIVE POLITICAL PROBLEM ON THE CONTINENT.

2. WE WOULD ADD THREE OTHER POINTS TO AN ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS QUO AS PERCEIVED FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: FIRST, THE SOVIET UNION HAS, LARGELY BY ITS POLITICAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, SUCCEEDED IN PROJECTING THE IMAGE OF A "PROGRESSIVE" AND DYNAMIC FORCE ESPOUSING CHANGE ON THIS CONTINENT FOR PAST QUARTER CENTURY OF DECOLONIZATION WHILE THE U.S. WAS (UNTIL SOME TWO YEARS AGO) MOSTLY ON THE SIDE OF THE COLONIAL REGIMES; SECOND,
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WE CANNOT EXPECT TO ROLL BACK THIS (LARGELY) SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE BY EXISTING PEACEKEEPING MEANS ANY MORE THAN WE CAN ELIMINATE IRRATIONAL BORDERS OR ETHNIC DIVISIONS; THIRD, THE COMBINATION OF THE ABOVE FACTORS, I.E., THE SOVIET UNION'S ENTRENCHED IMAGE AS A RELIABLE SOURCE OF POLITICAL SUPPORT AND ITS OPEN-ENDED MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, HAS INTRODUCED A DISRUPTIVE POLITICAL

AND MILITARY COMPONENT INTO CONTEMPORARY AFRICA, ONE THAT IS, FURTHERMORE, NOT SEEN BY AFRICANS AS ALIEN OR HOSTILE IN VIEW OF USSR'S ROLE IN THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS.

3. THIS MILITARY COMPONENT IS EVIDENT IN THE EVENTS OF SHABA WHICH CONTAIN LESSONS NOT ONLY FOR AFRICANS BUT FOR US AS WELL. THEY INCLUDE: FIRST, THE FACT THAT, TO BE EFFECTIVE, PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA CURRENTLY AND REALISTICALLY HAS TO INCLUDE A COMPONENT OF CONVENTIONAL FORCE, WHETHER ORGANIZED ON A NATIONAL, BILATERAL OR INTERNATIONAL BASIS, E.G., THROUGH THE UN OR OAU; SECOND, WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE A VIRTUAL MONOPOLY OF (NON-COMMUNIST) MILITARY FORCE WITH THE RANGE AND POWER NECESSARY TO COUNTER SOVIET-ORIGIN OR SOVIET-SURROGATE ARMS, EQUIPMENT AND MANPOWER; THIRD, FOR HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS, THE WESTERN COUNTRIES CANNOT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE USE THEIR POWER IN AFRICA (EXCEPT IN RARE EMERGENCIES LIKE SHABA), EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, AND EXPECT TO DO SO WITH THE GENERAL APPROVAL OF A MAJORITY OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES; FOURTH, IT IS BY BEING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ISSUES THAT WAYS MAY GRADUALLY BE FOUND OF LEGITIMIZING A MORE DIRECT WESTERN ROLE IN ASSISTING AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO COUNTER EXISTING OUTSIDE INTERVENTION, PROTECT THEIR MINORITIES AND REFUGEES AND DEAL WITH THREATS TO PEACE AND STABILITY.

5. CONCLUSION: THE STARTING POINT IN EFFORTS TO UPROOT AND
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EVENTUALLY ROLL BACK SOVIET PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE ON THE CONTINENT IS TO ADOPT POLICIES THAT WILL ENABLE AFRICAN OPINION TO ASSOCIATE WITH US. OUR CURRENT POLICY ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES, INCLUDING OUR DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES (IN ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA), UNDERTAKEN IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED HAS ALREADY STRENGTHENED IMMEASURABLY THAT ABILITY TO COMPETE WITH THE SOVIETS. WHEN THE CONSENSUS OF AFRICAN OPINION IS WITH US, AS ON THESE ISSUES, PEACEKEEPING OPTIONS ARISE, E.G., IN THE FORM OF UN FORCES FOR PROSPECTIVE SETTLEMENTS IN BOTH ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA. IN THE ABSENCE OF CONSENSUS AMONG AFRICAN COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN DISPUTES ELSEWHERE ON THE CONTINENT, WE CAN ONLY PRESCRIBE SELECTIVE AD HOC BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE, BOWH DIRECT AND INDIRECT. THE ESSENTIAL CONDITION IS THAT AFRICAN PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS BE WITH US.

6. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.
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